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ABSTRACT

Results of a process evaluation of dropout prevention programs in the Leon County (Florida) school district during the school year 1989-90 are presented. Altogether, 11 dropout programs were operationalized in that school year. The methodology used for developing a problem survey among teachers and administrators, the results of the evaluation, and recommendations for program improvement are presented. In all, these programs served 1,900 students during the school year. All of the programs met criteria established by the school district, and featured small classes, a variety of instructional approaches, and close teacher contact with students and parents. Development of the survey began with identification of areas of concern through 38 qualitative interviews with teachers and administrators. The instrument, which consisted of 43 statements in 8 problem areas, was sent to 118 teachers and 32 administrators, with responses from 70 teachers and 23 program administrators. Teachers saw more serious problems than did administrators, but all respondents recognized the potential of the programs for dropout reduction. Five tables present study findings. (Contains 13 references.) (SLD)

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PROCESS EVALUATION IN DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAMS: DETECTING AND PREDICTING PROBLEMS THROUGH THE USE OF PROBLEM SURVEY

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Special Programs
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Leon County School District

Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Evaluation Association
Washington, D.C.
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessary reflect the position or policy of the Office of Special Programs or the Leon County School District.

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The purpose of this paper is to present the results of a process evaluation of dropout prevention programs in Leon County School District, Florida during the school year 1989-90. Altogether 11 dropout prevention programs were operationalized during that school year. Specifically, this paper has three main objectives: (1) to describe the methodology used for developing a problem and benefit survey among teachers and administrators; (2) to present the results regarding problems associated with the implementation of dropout prevention programs and (3) to propose recommendations for program improvement. The study was conducted between March and June 1990.

Background

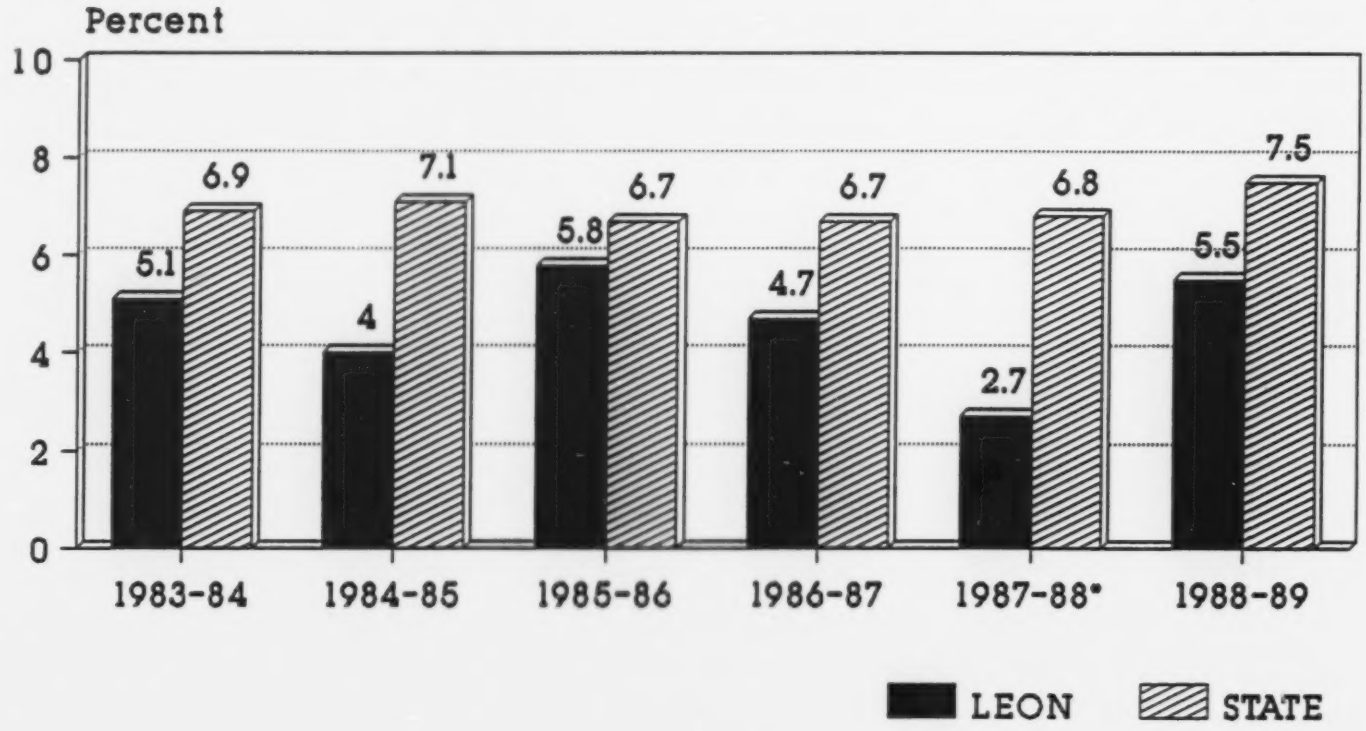
The current interest in identifying, predicting and developing programs for the "at risk population" has developed rapidly over the past five years as local, state and national agencies have been under pressure from the public to make our school system more efficient. At the heart of this discussion is the apparent inability of the educational system to prevent a large number of students from dropping out.

Like every other state in the nation, Florida is concerned with the large percentage of its students who drop out before completing high school. Since the 1983-84 school year, statistics have been collected on the number of students who drop out before graduation or completion of a program of studies. For the 1988-89 school year, a total of 36,878 ninth to twelfth grade students (7.5%) dropped out. This represents a slight increase from the previous rate of 6.91% for the 87-88 school year. At present, the Florida Department of Education has established the goal of achieving a dropout rate in high school of four percent or less by 1992.

The dropout problem is also a major concern in Leon County School District, a middle sized school district in north Florida and the site of the state capital. A comparison of dropout rates for Leon County and the State of Florida can be seen in Figure 1.

In 1986 the Florida Legislature adopted the Dropout Prevention Act to increase the number of students completing high school and receiving a high school diploma. District School Boards were encouraged to establish dropout prevention programs to meet the needs of students who were not effectively served by conventional education programs in the public system.

DROPOUTS GRADES 9-12
LEON CO. VS. STATE 1983-89



(*This year's rate reflects a correction in our district's coding procedure & is likely a conservative figure.)

Figure 1

The Leon County School System addressed this challenge by offering several alternative education programs to aid students with the potential for success who are not motivated, or are disinterested in school. These programs are designed to assist students in grades 4-12, and are targeted for improving academic skills and attendance, increasing Leon County's promotion rate and decreasing the county's overall dropout rate. During the 89-90 school year, a total of 11 programs at elementary, middle and high levels were put in place. Special programs such as the Teenage Parent Program (TAP), Substance Abuse (DISC) and Youth Services were also implemented. Altogether, the droput prevention programs served a total of 1,900 students in the 1989-90 school year. The cost factor of 1.722 assigned to the programs resulted in an appropriation for each full-time equivalent student (FTE) in the program of $4,300.

The programs differ from traditional education programs in philosophy, curriculum implementation, structure and teaching strategies. Below is a summary of the main components common to the alternative education programs. When appropriate, the specific characteristics of some of the programs will be mentioned.

Program Components

1. Students may be referred by teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, parents and students themselves.

2. They must meet two or more of the criteria established by the Florida Department of Education and included in the Comprehensive Dropout Prevention Plan. The criteria address the major indicators related to "at risk students" i.e. failing grades, retention, poor attendance, poor self esteem, negative attitude toward school, etc. With regard to the TAP program, students are referred mainly because of pregnancy. Disc Village students are usually in the custody of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (DHRS) and have a documented substance abuse problem. Youth Services students are adjudicate or dependent youth.

3. Participation in the program should be voluntary. Once a student meets the eligibility criteria and is selected for possible placement, his/her parent(s)/guardian is notified in writing of placement eligibility and informed of rights and responsibilities. The student is placed in the program only after approval is given in writing by a parent/guardian.

4. Classes should be smaller. (Approximately 16 students.

5. Teachers should closely monitor student progress and offer constant reward and recognize good academic performance, improved attendance and demonstration of good citizenship behavior.

6. The curriculum should be presented using an integrated approach, making the instruction relevant to the needs, interests and talents of the students.

7. The curriculum should follow the quidelines for academic curriculum as stated in the district's pupil progression plan. It should also meet the minimum performance standards set by the State of Florida. A unique part of the curriculum for high school students is the provision of Peer Counseling -- a course that provides the students the opportunity to learn and use counseling techniques in working with others.

8. Teachers should use a variety of instructional strategies to match students interests, needs and ability level to the level of difficulty of school curriculum. Some of the approaches used are: cooperative learning, peer tutoring/peer counseling, hands-on, multisensory, project-oriented activities, simulations, group development and group dynamics experiences. An individualized, self-paced curriculum is offered in one high school, the Secondary Skill Program (SSP).

9. Teachers should maintain close contact with the parents of participating students. At one middle school, parent support and involvement is a condition for participating in the program.

10. A team approach is recommended to address the needs of students and their families. Social workers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, and school staff should join with personnel from outside agencies (Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Labor, Employment and Security, Department of Law Enforcement, etc.) to diagnose special needs and to provide support services for students and their families.

11. Students should attend a minimum of three (3) alternative education instructional periods per day. One of the high schools, the School for Applied Individualized

Learning (SAIL) offers seven (7) classes a day. In another program, the Secondary Skills Program (SSP) students attend academic classes for three hours each day and spend the remainder of the day attending vocational classes or working part-time as part of the work study component (DCT).

12. An in-service training for dropout prevention teachers should be delivered through summer institutes, district in-service training sessions, individual study activities, etc. Some of the areas of interest are: classroom management, behavior management, developing motivation, self-esteem, etc.

Need for Product and Process Evaluation of Dropout Prevention Programs

At this time of great concern with the problem of the school dropout, much has been written on graduation rate and dropout rate (GAO, 1986, 1987; Fine, 1987; Morrow, 1987; Johnson, 1990; Ligon et.al. 1990; Olson, 1990). Numerous studies have focused on systems to identify and predict at risk students (Barber et.al. 1987; Brodinsky et.al. 1989; Taite, 1990; Wilkinson, et.al. 1990) using a series of variables to arrive at a profile of the dropout. Thus, most scientific research in the area is concerned with factors (academic, personal experience and family background) that correlate with the probability of leaving high school before graduation (Natriello et.al. 1988).

Few studies have been concerned with evaluating the programs intended to reduce dropping out. Furthermore, when these programs are evaluated the main evaluation purpose is to access the effectiveness of the programs and not the process that brings about the outcomes. As one author stated "Despite the many prevention programs being implemented by school and districts, we still have little knowledge about what actually works to reduce dropout" (Natriello et.al., 1988).

The need for process data is much needed in the area of program implementation of dropout prevention programs. This need was recognized by the United States General Accounting Office (1987) in their review of dropout programs. The report concludes that "it may be unrealistic to expect much successful program outcomes until a program is fully operational" (p. 335). The authors contend that school officials must confront the practical problems of implementation. The Center for Dropout Prevention at the University of Miami (1987) in their Manual for Developing Comprehensive Plans also recommends the gathering of process evaluation information for purposes of program improvement.

One of the purposes of process evaluation is to detect and/or predict defects in a program by identifying and monitoring the potential sources of failure in a project. To the extent that problems can be anticipated, they can often be avoided or met in some way as to minimize harmful effects on the project.

The evaluation literature has always stressed the importance of identifying and anticipating problems during program implementation (Brinkerhoff, et.al., 1983); Foster and Grahan, 1971; Scriven, 1967, 1983; and Stufflebeam, 1971, 1988).

Recognizing the importance of this endeavor, a process evaluation of the dropout prevention programs in Leon County was proposed and included in the overall evaluation plan for the 1988-89 school year. The strategy for this evaluation was the development of a problem and benefit survey among teachers and administrators.

Evaluation Questions

After becoming familiar with the literature regarding alternative education/dropout prevention programs, the author met with the program contact to discuss the proposed evaluation. A list of tentative evaluation questions was then drafted and discussed with other evaluators and program staff. The final list resulted in the following questions:

1. What is the perception of teachers and administrators regarding the seriousness of the problems affecting the dropout prevention programs in Leon County? What were the items considered as "serious" and "very serious"? What were the items considered "not a serious problem" and "not a problem"? Is there a consensus between these two groups?

2. When considering school levels (elementary, middle and high school), is there a difference regarding the nature and seriousness of the problems affecting dropout prevention programs in Leon County?

3. What are the ten most serious problems which inhibit the success of the programs? Do teachers and administrators differ in their perception? Are there differences among school levels?

4. What do teachers and administrators perceive as the benefits, both immediate and future, for students in the alternative education programs?

5. Are there differences among school levels regarding the benefits of the dropout prevention programs?

This paper addresses the first three evaluation questions. Results of the benefit survey will be included in a separate paper.

Methodology

Instrument Development

Foster and Grahan (1971) have suggested the use of a series of questionnaires called problem survey to identify potential problems in a project. These authors have suggested that personnel directly involved in the implementation of a program are the best qualified to identify critical problems. Simply asking such persons to state problem areas generally results in a fairly extensive listing. Therefore, these authors suggest that the first step in conducting a problem survey is the development of an open-ended questionnaire to allow respondents maximum freedom in the identification of problem areas.

The authors contend that the initial questionnaire must convey two important ideas to program personnel. First, personnel should understand that anticipated problems in the implementation phase of a program are to be expected. Second, the process evaluator should convey the idea that in order for the questionnaire to be a successful problem identification strategy, the respondents must be open and candid in their responses.

In this study, qualitative interviews were used instead of open-ended questionnaires to guide the development of the instrument. The steps conducted were: (a) qualitative interviews with a sample of teachers and administrators,(b) recording of the interviews in a data base, (c) analysis of the data identifying specific problem areas, (d) categorization of problem areas, (e) development of forced-choice problem survey and open-ended benefit survey and (f) formative evaluation of the instrument through one-to-one evaluation. A brief explanation of these steps will follow.

Qualitative Interviews

A total of 38 interviews following the interview guide approach (Patton, 1990) were conducted with alternative education/ dropout prevention teachers, program coordinators and project directors. The purpose of the interviews was to guide the development of the problem survey.

Before the interviews took place, a set of issues that were to be explored were written in advance. No set of questions were written in advance and no particular order was followed. The interviews were developed at the school site and occurred in an informal fashion. At least 2 or 3 persons at each site were interviewed. All the middle schools, high schools and 8 of the 18 elementary schools were visited. In addition, staff from the special projects, TAP and Youth Services were also included in the sample.

Some of the issues discussed were:

- Program strengths and weaknesses - things they like, they dislike, best features, poor features, etc.
- Training criteria for selecting teachers for the program.
- Instructional strategies, schedule, location of program.
- Community and parental support.
- Identification and selection of students.
- Learning environment and support from administration and school staff.
- Staff development.

The interviews were followed by a visit to one or two classrooms. An average of 3 hours was spent on each site.

Analysis of interview data

A cross-case analysis by issue was conducted and the answers from the different participants were grouped by problem topic. Variations to common questions were noted. During this phase it was specifically important to separate solutions from problems and to recognize that the same problem might be stated in different ways.

A preliminary list of 70 problems was then placed in categories using the major components of the programs as a guide. The problems were then reduced to a set of items that elicited standard responses. These items were used to develop the questionnaire. This first draft was then sent by mail to three teachers for their review and comments.

Construction of the questionnaire.

Based on this tryout of the instrument, revisions were made in the structure of the questionnaire. The final form of the

instrument consisted of 43 statements categorized into eight problem areas related to: (1) scheduling; (2) lack of clearly defined procedures; (3) building and equipment; (4) parental and community involvement; (5) provision of essential services; (6) lack of support; (7) staffing and training and (8) classroom instruction. At the end of each category a space was provided for the addition of new problems.

The respondents were asked to indicate their degree of general agreement concerning the seriousness of each problem stated. They indicated their opinions by checking the following response categories: Very Serious Problem, Serious Problem, Has Not Been a Serious Problem, Has Not been a Problem, and Not Relevant to the Program

In the analysis of the data it was decided that the five categories of the response scales could be better understood if condensed. The categories Very Serious Problem and Serious Problem were combined into one category labeled Serious. The category Not Relevant to the Program was eliminated from the analysis. Therefore, the data will be reported on a three unit scale.

After completing the scales the respondents were asked to pick out the ten problems, which, in their opinion. most inhibited the success of the program by circling the item numbers.

A second part of the survey, a benefit survey, consisted of two open questions regarding intended and unintended benefits.

Results

A total of 118 questionnaires were sent to the alternative education, CITY school and Teenage Parent Program teachers. Seventy teachers (60%) representing thirty-three (89%) dropout prevention programs answered the survey. Of the thirty-two school/programs, twenty-three (70%) completed the survey for administrators. Some schools administrators returned more than one survey. Overall, thirty-six questionnaires were received from administrators.

Table 1 presents the distribution of returned surveys per school/program and per job position.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES PER SCHOOL/PROGRAM BY JOB POSITION

School/Program	# Schools	Position: Teachers	Position: Administrator	Total
Elementary Schools	15	20	17	37
Middle Schools	6	14	10	24
Project Escape[a]	1	2	-	2
High Schools	4	16	7	23
SSP[b]	1	3	-	3
SAIL[b]	1	7	1	8
TAP[c]	1	4	1	5
CITY/DISC[d]	2	4	-	4
TOTAL		70	36	106

[a] Middle School Program for Overaged Students.

[b] Alternative High Schools

[c] Teenage Parent Program

[d] Youth Service/Substance Abuse Programs

The results of the study are presented here according to the questions identified earlier.

1. What is the perception of teachers and administrators regarding the seriousness of the problems affecting the dropout prevention programs In Leon County? What were the items considered as "serious" and "very serious"? What were the items considered "not a serious problem" and "not a problem"? Is there a consensus between these two groups?

Table 2 presents the perceptions of respondents regarding the seriousness of the problems.

Of the 43 items in the survey, 10 items (23%) were rated as a "serious problem" by a majority of the teachers and/or administrators. These problems are listed with the letter in parentheses indicating whether teachers, administrators or both identified the item as a serious problem.

-- Lack of clearly defined procedures for promoting school attendance (T).

-- Obtaining and maintaining parent support (A).

-- Regular school counseling services not enough for alternative education student (T,A).

-- Regular school social work services not enough for alternative education student (T).

-- Lack of a full-time counselor for alternative education students (T,A).

-- Lack of family counseling and crisis intervention (T,A).

-- Lack of a full-time aide in each classroom (T,A).

-- Too much time spent in classroom management and discipline problems (T).

-- More time spent by teacher dealing with the students' personal and familial problems than teaching.

-- Traditional curriculum is not relevant to many students (T,A).

Most of these problems are related to the category of lack of provision of essential services (4 items) and classroom instruction (3 items). Teachers and administrators are in agreement regarding

the need for counseling services and the need for an instructional aide. Teachers seem more concerned with lack of procedures for promoting school attendance and principals believe that parental support is a critical area.

It should be noted that some items were rated as serious by teachers and administrators but not by a majority of either groups.

These items are listed below.

-- Not enough time for consultation with individual students.

-- Lack of clearly defined procedures for identifying and recruiting "at risk students".

-- Lack of clearly defined procedures for selecting students that would most benefit from the program.

-- Recruiting tutors and mentors from the community.

-- Organizing activities (field trips, meetings, etc) to secure parent involvement.

-- Lack of team approach in addressing the needs of alternative education students.

-- Lack of appropriate training for teachers before being assigned to alternative education programs.

-- Not enough information on employability skills and career awareness included in the curriculum.

Items not Considered a Problem. As summarized in Table 2, 17 items (39.6%) were rated as "not a problem" by a majority of the teachers or administrators. These items belonged to the categories of scheduling, support and training (4 items) and building and equipment (5 items). Again, a general agreement exists between teachers and administrators regarding areas not considered a problem. An exception is the problem related to teacher turnover. Fifty-four percent of the teachers considered it not to be a problem while only 26% of the administrators perceived this area as a non-problem area.

Items Considered Not a Serious Problem. As can be seen in Table 2, none of the items were rated by the majority of teachers and administrators as being a "problem but not serious". Administrators seem, again, more concerned with the area of parental and community involvement than teachers. Five out of six items on this category was rated by 40% of the administrators as being a problem although not serious.

2. When considering school levels (elementary, middle and high school), is there a difference regarding the nature and seriousness of the problems affecting dropout prevention programs in Leon County?

An exam of Table 3 suggests that teachers and administrators at the high school level see more serious problems in their programs than the staff at the elementary and middle school levels. In addition, the nature of the problems seem, in some cases, unique to the school level.

Of the 43 items in the survey, 16 items were rated as "serious problem" by a majority of the respondents participating in programs at the high school level. At the middle school level, 6 items were rated as a "serious problem" and at the elementary level, 7 items were considered serious.

Across all levels (elementary, middle and high), there is a consensus regarding the critical problems. These problems are related to lack of counseling services (items 23,25,27) lack of full time aide (item 37) and to problems related to classroom management and instruction (items 40,41,42).

At the middle school level, a major concern exists with teacher turnover (item 38) and lack of appropriate training for teachers being assigned to the dropout prevention programs (item 34). The latter was also considered a serious problem by the majority of high school respondents.

In addition, high school participants are concerned about problems in the area of lack of clearly defined procedures related to selection and retrieval of students, promoting school attendance and parental involvement (items 17,20,21).

Items not Considered a Problem. Participants involved with the elementary alternative education programs see fewer problems in their programs than their counterparts at the middle and high school level; of the 43 items in the survey, 16 items were rated as "not a problem" by a majority of the elementary school personnel. At the middle school level, 13 items were rated as "not a problem" and at the high school level, 10 items were considered "not a problem".

At the elementary level, these items are related to scheduling (items 1,2,3,4,5) lack of clearly defined procedures (item 9), equipment (items 11,12,15), lack of support (items 28,29,31,32) and training and staffing (33,35,38).

At the middle school level, the items not considered a problem are related to scheduling (item 3), lack of clearly defined procedures (12,13,14,15), parental involvement (items 21,22), lack

of support (items 28,29,31,32) and training and staffing (items 35, 36).

At the high school level, the items not considered a problem are related to scheduling (item 4), building and equipment (items 12,13,14,15,16), lack of support (item 31) and training and staffing (items 35,36,38).

3. What are the ten most serious problems which inhibit the success of the program? Do teachers and administrators differ in their perception? Are there differences among school levels?

The respondents were asked to identify the ten (10) problems which in their opinion most inhibited the success of the alternative education programs. The number of times the item was mentioned was used to arrive at a list in order of priority. Percentages were then calculated for the total sample, for teachers and administrators.

An examination of Table 4 confirms the results described earlier. Teachers and administrators in general agree in their perceptions with small variations. As it was expected, teachers seem more concerned with problems related to lack of counseling services for students and classroom management. Administrators placed a greater importance toward securing parent involvement and family counseling. Obtaining and maintaining parental support was mentioned by 55% of the administrators as a problem while only 34% of teachers considered this item as being one of the most serious.

Another area considered critical by the respondents was lack of a full-time aide. The respondents ranked this problem fourth in priority. Finally, the area of training deserves attention. Although most of the items related to training were not considered problems, the provision of training for new teachers before being assigned to the programs was. This item was ranked in sixth place.

Differences across school levels. When looking at the ranking of the 10 most serious problems across school levels (Table 5), important features are revealed. It appears that the nature of the problems are somewhat different depending on the school level. It is true that there is a general agreement across all levels that the lack of regular school counseling services inhibits the success of the programs. However, staff at the elementary level placed greater emphasis on this area. Teachers feel that they spent too much time taking care of the students' familial and personal problems in detriment of quality instructional time. The first three top problems at the elementary level are related to provision of counseling services.

At the middle school level, there is a great concern regarding the lack of appropriate training for teachers before being

assigned to the programs. Almost 60% of the respondents mentioned this problem as one of the most critical. The physical location of the programs in areas characterized for serving the so called "different student" was ranked among the 10 most serious problems only by the middle school staff. Finally, the need of a full-time aide in each classroom seems more critical at the middle school level. This item was ranked in third place.

The problems ranked at the high school level present a different picture. At this level, great concern exists regarding parental involvement than at any other level. This problem was ranked in second place. In addition, a lack of understanding regarding the program rules and procedures is evident. The problems related to lack of clearly defined procedures for promoting school attendance, selecting students that would most benefit from the program and identifying and recruiting "at risk students" were ranked in third, fourth and seventh place respectively.

Finally, a concern with discipline and classroom management exists at the elementary and middle school level. This problem was ranked in fourth place.

Conclusions

In this paper the methodology used in a problem survey was described. The results obtained with this technique were reported hoping that they can contribute to a better understanding of the complex issues confronting dropout prevention programs during their implementation.

The high rate of return obtained from teachers (60%) was an encouraging factor and gives more credibility to the results obtained. This high return seemed a result of involving teachers and administrators in the development of the survey instrument.

Of the 43 items in the survey, 10 items were rated as "a serious problem" and 17 items were considered "not to be a problem" by the majority of teachers and principals. Teachers tended to be more critical. They saw more problems as being serious than administrators. School levels seem to influence the nature of the problems. Personnel working with high school students identified more problems as being serious than personnel in programs at the elementary and middle school level.

This section summarizes the main problem areas identified in the study.

1. Problems related to lack of provision of essential services

Most of the critical problems identified in this study were related to the category of lack of provision of counseling services and social services across all school levels (elementary, middle and high).

This seems consistent with the current view that suggests that a range of outside school-factors affecting the at-risk student contribute to dropping out. These liabilities include a series of personal, familial and community problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, single-parent families, family crises and family financial needs. In attempting to deal with these problems, teachers find themselves spending more time dealing with the students' personal and familial problems than with teaching. The regular school counseling services are not sufficient to deal with the at risk student.

During the course of the interviews, teachers voiced the opinion that a case management approach needs to be introduced into the schools. With this approach, different services are provided to a targeted group of students in the school. These services are delivered in the school by a team of human service workers from other organizations under contract to the school.

2. Problems related to classroom instruction.

Another area of concern identified in this study was related to classroom management and instruction. During the course of the interviews, some teachers expressed the concern that the traditional curriculum is not relevant to many students. They argued that there is a lack of appropriate match between the academic program of the school and the skills and interests of the students.

Natriello (1988), suggests three basic strategies to counteract the lack of match between the school program and the needs of the students. First, he contends that it is possible to individualize the curriculum and instructional strategy so that the curriculum is tailored to each student's ability. Second, students' skills and abilities should be strengthened to permit them to meet the expectations of the school curriculum. Finally, the school academic program should be made more salient to the lives of students.

3. Problems related to Parental Involvement.

To obtain and maintain parent support was of a great concern, especially, among high school principals. In the opinion of some of the respondents, only through the combined efforts of the educational staff, can parents become more aware of and involved in ways to solve their social and school related concerns.

4. Problems related to staffing and training.

In general, the category related to training was not considered

problem as it refers to in-service training. However, provision of training for new teachers before being assigned to the programs was considered a serious problem,especially, at the middle school level. Sixty percent of the middle school respondents ranked this problem as one of the most serious.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the majority of the items belonging to the categories of scheduling, building and equipment and support from administrators were not considered problems.

Further research is required to integrate and expand our understanding of the problems that affect the implementation of dropout prevention programs so that the factors that contribute to the success of a program can be identified.

TABLE 2

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Seriousness of Problems in Alternative Education Programs Indicated in Percentage by School Position

Problem/Statements	Teachers (N=70)			Administration (N=36)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
Scheduling Problems						
1. Not enough time for students to practice what they learn	11.3	42.0	46.8	9.4	34.4	56.3
2. Lack of common planning time for A.E. teachers	32.4	30.9	36.8	14.7	29.4	55.9
3. Appropriate scheduling for optimal learning	27.3	21.2	51.5	20.0	20.0	60.0
4. Not enough block time with teacher	12.5	32.8	54.7	18.2	24.2	57.6
5. Not enough time for consultation with individual students	33.8	32.4	33.8	36.4	15.2	48.5
Problems Relating to Lack of Clearly Defined Procedures for:						
6. Identifying and recruiting "at risk students"	42.6	29.4	27.9	41.2	23.5	35.3
7. Selecting students that would most benefit from the program	41.8	34.3	23.9	45.5	21.2	33.3
8. Mainstreaming students back into regular classes	31.9	36.2	31.9	26.5	38.2	35.3
9. Retrieving students at risk of withdrawing	38.6	29.9	31.3	31.3	31.3	37.5
10. Promoting school attendance	54.5	18.2	27.3	33.3	39.4	27.3
Problems of Buildings, Equipment and Space						
11. Not enough space in classrooms for group work	34.9	19.0	46.0	15.2	39.4	45.5

SP = Serious Problem
NS = A Problem but Not Serious
NP = Not a Problem

TABLE 2 (Cont)

Problem/Statements	Teachers (N=70)			Administration (N=36)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
12. Classrooms too large and open	6.3	14.1	79.7	--	24.2	75.8
13. Classrooms physically isolated from the main building (portables)	18.5	23.1	58.5	23.5	23.5	52.9
14. Rooms are too noisy for classroom instruction	17.5	30.2	52.4	6.3	31.3	62.5
15. Location of program in the main building but in an area characterized for serving the so called "dumb" or "different" student	13.8	23.1	63.1	9.1	15.2	75.8
16. Lack of telephone in classrooms	32.8	17.9	49.3	32.4	14.7	52.9
Problems Relating to Involvement of Parents and Community						
17. Obtaining and maintaining parent support	47.7	35.4	16.9	54.3	20.0	25.7
18. Securing the support of community organizations (private sector and government agencies)	32.8	28.1	39.1	30.3	42.4	27.3
19. Recruiting tutors and mentors from the community	37.5	31.3	31.3	36.4	48.5	15.2
20. Organizing activities (field trips, meetings, etc) to secure parent involvement	35.9	34.4	29.7	36.4	39.4	24.2
21. Contact parents through telephone calls and notes	32.8	29.7	37.5	30.3	48.5	21.2
22. Obtaining parent consent for student enrollment	16.4	34.4	49.2	34.4	40.6	25.0
Problems Relating to Provision of Essential Services						
23. Regular school counseling services not enough for alternative education student	70.1	14.9	14.9	55.9	20.6	23.5
24. Regular school social work services not enough for alternative education student	62.1	21.2	16.7	46.9	34.4	18.8

TABLE 2 (Cont)

Problem/Statements	Teachers (N=70)			Administration (N=36)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
25. Lack of a full time counselor for alternative education students	65.7	9.0	25.4	51.5	24.2	24.2
26. Lack of team approach in addressing the needs of alternative education students	34.4	26.6	39.1	34.4	31.3	34.4
27. Lack of family counseling and crisis intervention	64.1	15.6	20.3	75.0	15.6	9.4
Problems Relating to Lack of Support from:						
28. School Administrators	29.9	20.9	49.3	--	18.2	81.8
29. Alternative Education Teachers	14.9	23.9	61.2	8.8	29.4	61.8
30. Non-Alternative Education Teachers	28.4	28.4	43.3	5.9	47.1	47.1
31. Alternative Education Coordinator	6.1	21.2	72.7	5.9	17.6	76.5
32. District Staff	17.7	35.5	46.8	3.1	25.0	71.9
Problems Relating to Staffing and Training						
33. Not enough in-service opportunities	21.5	30.8	47.7	14.7	32.4	52.9
34. Lack of appropriate training for teachers before being assigned to alternative education	47.1	26.5	26.5	45.5	27.3	27.3
35. Lack of coordinator's input in the selection of new teachers	12.9	12.9	74.2	6.7	13.3	80.0
36. Too much teaching time for high school coordinator	27.9	4.9	67.2	20.7	6.9	72.4
37. Lack of a full_time aide in each classroom	63.2	10.3	26.5	52.9	26.5	20.6
38. Teacher turn over	29.5	16.4	54.1	40.0	33.3	26.7
Problems Relating to Classroom Instruction						
39. Lack of appropriate instructional materials	41.5	29.2	29.2	30.3	36.4	33.3

TABLE 2 (Cont)

Problem/Statements	Teachers (N=70)			Administration (N=36)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
40. Too much time is spent in classroom management and discipline problems	60.6	27.3	12.1	47.1	41.2	11.8
41. Teacher spends more time dealing with the students' personal and familial problems than teaching	50.8	31.7	17.5	42.4	45.5	12.1
42. Traditional curriculum is not relevant to many students	58.5	26.2	15.4	58.8	17.6	23.5
43. Not enough information on employability skills and career awareness included in the curriculum	45.9	14.8	39.3	38.2	38.2	23.5

TABLE 3

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Seriousness of Problems in Alternative Education Programs Indicated in Percentage by School Level

Problem/Statements	Elementary (N=37)			Middle School (N=28)			High School (N=41)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
Scheduling Problems									
1. Not enough time for students to practice what they learn	16.1	16.1	67.7	12.5	45.8	41.7	5.1	53.8	41.0
2. Lack of common planning time for A.E. teachers	12.1	18.2	69.7	28.6	32.1	39.3	36.6	39.0	24.4
3. Appropriate scheduling for optimal learning	21.2	6.1	72.7	7.4	40.7	51.9	39.0	19.5	41.5
4. Not enough block time with teacher	13.3	16.7	70.0	14.8	40.7	44.2	15.0	32.5	52.5
5. Not enough time for consultation with individual students	31.3	15.6	53.1	35.7	32.1	32.1	36.6	31.7	31.7
Problems Relating to Lack of Clearly Defined Procedures for:									
6. Identifying and recruiting "at risk students"	36.4	27.3	36.4	32.1	39.3	28.6	53.7	19.5	26.8

SP = Serious Problem

NS = A Problem But Not Serious

NP = Not a Problem

TABLE 3 (Cont)

Problem/Statements	Elementary (N=37)			Middle School (N=28)			High School (N=41)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
7. Selecting students that would most benefit from the program	25.6	37.5	37.5	33.3	37.0	29.6	63.4	19.5	17.1
8. Mainstreaming students back into regular classes	26.5	35.3	38.2	28.6	32.1	39.3	34.1	41.5	24.4
9. Retrieving students at risk of withdrawing	6.5	41.9	51.6	25.9	29.6	44.4	65.9	22.0	12.2
10. Promoting school attendance	12.9	38.7	48.4	44.4	18.5	37.0	75.6	19.5	4.9
Problems of Buildings, Equipment and Space									
11. Not enough space in classrooms for group work	10.0	23.3	66.7	26.9	34.6	38.5	42.5	22.5	35.0
12. Classrooms too large and open	--	16.1	83.9	7.7	15.4	76.9	5.0	20.0	75.0
13. Classrooms physically isolated from the main building (portables)	18.8	37.5	43.8	33.3	11.1	55.6	12.5	20.0	67.5
14. Rooms are too noisy for classroom instruction	16.1	35.5	48.4	16.0	32.0	52.0	10.3	25.6	64.1
15. Location of program in the main building but in an area characterized for serving the so called "dumb" or "different" student	15.6	28.1	56.3	18.5	14.8	66.7	5.1	17.9	76.9
16. Lack of telephone in classrooms	24.2	27.3	48.5	42.9	14.3	42.9	32.5	10.0	57.5

TABLE 3 (Cont)

Problem/Statements	Elementary (N=37)			Middle School (N=28)			High School (N=41)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
Problems Relating to Involvement of Parents and Community									
17. Obtaining and maintaining parent support	38.2	35.3	26.5	46.2	26.9	26.9	62.5	27.5	10.0
18. Securing the support of community organizations (private sector and government agencies)	25.8	32.3	41.9	30.8	30.8	38.5	37.5	35.0	27.5
19. Recruiting tutors and mentors from the community	35.5	32.3	32.3	34.6	34.6	30.8	40.0	42.3	17.5
20. Organizing activities (field trips, meetings, etc.) to secure parent involvement	22.6	41.9	35.5	30.8	34.6	34.6	50.0	32.5	17.5
21. Contact parents through telephone calls, and notes	19.4	51.6	29.0	19.2	30.0	50.0	50.0	27.5	22.5
22. Obtaining parent consent for student enrollment	26.7	41.4	37.9	11.1	33.3	55.6	32.4	35.1	32.4
Problems Relating to Provision of Essential Services									
23. Regular school counseling services not enough for alternative education student	62.9	22.9	14.3	48.1	25.9	25.9	79.5	5.1	15.4
24. Regular school social work services not enough for alternative education student	48.4	35.5	16.1	33.3	40.7	25.9	80.0	7.5	12.5

TABLE 3 (Cont)

Problem/Statements	Elementary (N=37)			Middle School (N=28)			High School (N=41)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
25. Lack of a full time counselor for alternative education students	60.6	18.2	21.2	51.9	22.2	25.9	67.5	5.0	27.5
26. Lack of team approach in addressing the needs of alternative education students	35.5	22.6	41.9	32.0	24.0	44.0	35.0	35.0	30.0
27. Lack of family counseling and crisis intervention	68.8	15.6	15.6	57.7	15.4	26.9	73.7	15.8	10.5
Problems Relating to Lack of Support From:									
28. School Administrators	3.2	16.1	80.6	17.9	14.3	67.9	34.1	26.8	30.0
29. Alternative Education Teachers	3.1	9.4	87.5	25.0	25.0	50.0	12.2	39.0	48.0
30. Non-Alternative Education Teachers	12.5	34.4	53.7	10.7	46.4	42.9	34.1	26.8	39.0
31. Alternative Education Coordinator	9.1	15.2	75.8	--	17.9	82.1	7.7	25.6	66.7
32. District Staff	3.3	20.0	76.7	3.7	25.9	70.4	27.0	45.9	27.0
Problems Relating to Staffing and Training									
33. Not enough in-service opportunities	21.9	15.6	62.5	14.8	33.3	51.9	30.0	42.5	37.5
34. Lack of appropriate training for teachers before being assigned to alternative education	33.3	24.2	42.4	55.6	29.6	14.8	51.2	26.8	22.0

TABLE 3 (Cont)

Problem/Statements	Elementary (N=37)			Middle School (N=28)			High School (N=41)		
	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP	SP	NS	NP
35. Lack of coordinator's input in the selection of new teachers	--	3.6	96.4	4.3	13.0	82.6	22.0	19.5	58.5
36. Too much teaching time for high school coordinator	--	7.4	92.6	13.0	4.3	82.6	50.0	5.0	95.0
37. Lack of a full-time aide in each classroom	66.7	3.0	30.3	50.0	25.0	25.0	61.0	19.5	19.5
38. Teacher turn over	15.4	23.1	61.5	55.6	25.9	18.5	28.9	18.4	52.6
Problems Relating to Classroom Instruction									
39. Lack of appropriate instructional materials	29.0	29.0	41.9	34.6	38.5	26.9	46.3	29.3	24.4
40. Too much time is spent in classroom management and discipline problems	51.5	33.3	15.2	61.5	30.8	7.7	56.1	31.7	12.2
41. Teacher spends more time dealing with the students' personal and familial problems than teaching	53.3	23.3	23.3	46.2	34.6	19.2	45.0	47.5	7.5
42. Traditional curriculum is not relevant to many students	59.4	15.6	25.0	46.2	38.5	15.4	65.9	19.5	14.6
43. Not enough information on employability skills and career awareness included in the curriculum	36.7	20.0	43.3	30.8	30.8	38.5	56.4	20.5	23.1

TABLE 4

PERCEPTION OF RESPONDENTS REGARDING
THE TEN MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS RANKED BY
TOTAL SAMPLE, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

STATEMENT	Total Sample %	(N=106) Rank	Teachers %	(N=70) Rank	Admin.	(N=36) Rank
Regular school counseling services not enough for alternative education students	58	1	65.7	1	44.6	3
Obtaining and maintaining parent support	41.5	2	34.3	8	55.7	1.5
Lack of a full-time counselor for alternative education students	41.3	3	45.7	2	38.9	5
Lack of a full-time aide in each classroom	40.7	4	41.4	4	39.0	4
Lack of family counseling and crisis intervention	40.6	5	32.9	9	55.7	1.5
Too much time is spent in classroom management and dealing with discipline problems	40.4	6	44.3	3	35.4	8
Lack of appropriate training for teachers before being assigned to alternative education	39.6	7	38.6	6	36.3	6
Traditional curriculum is not relevant to many students	37.6	8	40.0	5	33.4	9.5

TABLE 4 (Cont)

STATEMENT	Total Sample %	(N=106) Rank	Teachers %	(N=70) Rank	Admin.	(N=36) Rank
Regular school social work services not enough for alternative education teachers	34.9	9	35.7	7	33.4	9.5
Identifying and recruiting "at risk students"	31.1	10	--	--	36.2	7
Teacher spends more time dealing with the student's personal and familial problems than teaching	--	--	32.6	10	25.0	11
Mainstreaming students back into regular classroom	--	--	--	--	22.3	12

TABLE 5

Percentage of Responses Regarding the Ten most Services Problems Ranked by Total Sample and School Levels

Statement	Total Sample N=106)		Elementary School (N=37)		Middle School (N=28)		High School (N=41)	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
1. Regular school counseling services not enough for alternative education students	58	1	64.8	1	35.8	2	61	1
2. Obtaining and maintaining parent support	41.5	2	29.7	7	--	--	44	2
3. Lack of a full-time counselor for alternative education students	41.3	3	48.6	2	--	--	33	5
4. Lack of a full-time aide in each classroom	40.7	4	39.7	6	32.2	3	--	--
5. Lack of family counseling and crisis intervention	40.6	5	45.9	3	--	--	34.6	6
6. Too much time is spent in classroom management and dealing with discipline problems	40.4	6	43.2	4	32	4	--	--
7. Lack of appropriate training for teachers before being assigned to alternative education	39.6	7	40.5	5	58.6	1	--	--
8. Traditional curriculum is not relevant to many students	37.6	8	29.6	8	--	--	--	--
9. Regular school social work services not enough for alternative education teachers	34.9	9	--	--	28.6	5	26.8	8

TABLE 5 (Cont)

Statement	Total Sample (N=106)		Elementary School (N=37)		Middle School (N=28)		High School (N=41)	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
10. Lack of clearly defined procedures for identifying and recruiting "at risk students"	31.1	10	--	--			31.7	7
11. Selecting students that would most benefit from the program	--	--	27.0	9	28.2	6	34.2	4
12. Lack of appropriate instructional materials	--	--	24.3	10	--	--	--	--
13. Classrooms physically isolated from the main buildings (portables)	--	--	--	--	21.9	7	--	--
14. Not enough time for consultation with individual students	--	--	--	--	21.4	8	--	--
15. Lack of support from school administrators	--	--	--	--	--	--	24.3	9
16. Lack of team approach in addressing the needs of alternative education teachers	--	--	--	--	21.3	9	--	--
17. Mainstreaming students back into regular classrooms	--	--	--	--	17.8	10	--	--
18. Lack of clearly defined procedures for promoting school attendance	--	--	--	--	--	--	43.9	3
19. Lack of common planning time for A.E. teachers	--	--	--	--	--	--	22	10

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